

(Washington, DC) - **Congressman Herger (R-CA)** testified before the **House Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands** today. The hearing, held to discuss the future of the forest economy, was designed to explore options at addressing the forest management deadlock and implementation of the **Quincy Library Group (QLG)** and determine how to address the situation either administratively or legislatively. Herger delivered the following opening statement and answered questions regarding the QLG. You can see video of his statement [here](#)

. His comments follow below:

"Thank you Chairman Grijalva and Ranking Member Bishop for holding this hearing today. I would also like to express my appreciation for three of my constituents who made the trip from California to testify today - Frank Stewart, Mark Pawlicki, and Glenn Zane. These gentlemen have been involved with this issue for many years and I thank them for taking the time to participate and lend their experience to this discussion.

"The Future of the Forest Economy' is a thought constantly on the minds of many of my constituents. In reality, the communities surrounding the 9 national forests in my district either already have or are in danger of losing their "forest economy" for good. In 1990 there were 41 lumber mills in operation in my district, now there are only 10. The effects of this dramatic decline in our timber industry are evident in our unnatural, unhealthy, and overstocked federal forests and the catastrophic wildfire we now witness year after year. Not to mention the social ills and unemployment that afflicts these rural forest communities struggling to survive.

"We have tried for years to bring consensus and collaborative efforts to restore management to the landscape but as those involved with the Quincy Library Group will tell you, those efforts have been thwarted time and again by groups who simply do not want to see our forests managed for the greater good. In the meantime, mills continue to close and our forests continue to burn - placing communities at-risk to losing their homes and businesses, costing taxpayers billions in suppression, and destroying wildlife habitat and watersheds in the process. In addition, anyone who went through last year's devastating fire season in Northern California can assure you that the public health impacts of the smoke from these fires are not to be taken lightly.

"With that said, I do not believe there really is a 'future' for our forest economy without bringing commonsense reform to break past these needless appeals, litigation, and other delays that

only serve an obstructionist agenda. Even with the current economic crisis and downturn in the housing market, proposals have been developed to expand the use of woody biomass from federal lands for renewable energy. Yet even these plans are being prevented on a large-scale by restrictive government policy and the same litigation issues affecting the broader timber industry. Think of that - an option to increase forest thinning, reduce the risk of fire and produce renewable, low emissions electricity, a win-win situation that we still cannot achieve.

"It is my hope that we can eventually break through this stalemate and restore balanced forest management to our federal forests, bring economic prosperity and good-paying jobs back to our forest communities, and reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire. Continuing down the same path that we have been on for the last few decades is simply unsustainable. Again, thank you for holding this hearing today and I look forward to the discussion."